



# **Single by Chance, Mothers by Choice: How Women are Choosing Parenthood without Marriage and Creating the New American Family**

*Rosanna Hertz*

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A remarkable number of women today are taking the daunting step of having children outside of marriage. In *Single By Chance, Mothers By Choice*, Rosanna Hertz offers the first full-scale account of this fast-growing phenomenon, revealing why these middle class women took this unorthodox path and how they have managed to make single parenthood work for them. Hertz interviewed 65 women--ranging from physicians and financial analysts to social workers, teachers, and secretaries--women who speak candidly about how they manage their lives and families as single mothers. What Hertz discovers are not ideologues but reluctant revolutionaries, women who--whether straight or gay--struggle to conform to the conventional definitions of mother, child, and family. Having tossed out the rulebook in order to become mothers, they nonetheless adhere to time-honored rules about child-rearing. As they tell their stories, they shed light on their paths to motherhood, describing how they summoned up the courage to pursue their dream, how they broke the news to parents, siblings, friends, and co-workers, how they went about buying sperm from fertility banks or adopting children of different races. They recount how their personal and social histories intersected to enable them to pursue their dream of motherhood, and how they navigate daily life. What does it mean to be single in terms of romance and parenting? How do women juggle earning a paycheck with parenting? What creative ways have women devised to shore up these families? How do they incorporate men into their child-centered families? This book provides concrete, informative answers to all these questions. A unique window on the future of the family, this book offers a gold mine of insight and reassurance for any woman contemplating this rewarding if unconventional step.

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